



**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS BUREAU
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE**

Procedure:	PFB 6.1.204 TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS AND RENTAL VOUCHERS	
Effective Date:	10/01/2020	Page 1 of 7
Revision Date(s):	09/13/2021; 09/15/2022	
Reference(s):	46-32-Part 1, MCA; 46-23-1002, MCA; 46-23-1041, MCA; 53-1-203, MCA; 20.13.108 A.R.M.	
Signature / Title:	/s/ Megan Coy, Community Corrections Facilities and Programs Bureau Chief	

This procedure is applicable to all FPB contracted facilities; however, this procedure is referenced as *ACCD 5.1.202 Prerelease Stipend and Special Needs Funding* in Section 1.G.1.c. Standard Contract Terms; Compensation/Billing; Compensation; Special funds, in the following contracts: Alternatives, Inc., Butte Prerelease, Gallatin County Reentry Program, Helena Prerelease, and Passages.

I. PURPOSE:

Staff of the Department of Corrections and the contracted facilities of the Community Corrections Facilities and Programs Bureau will follow established procedures when requesting funds that are available to assist eligible persons with financial needs.

II. DEFINITIONS:

Claimant – A person who was convicted and subsequently imprisoned for one or more felony crimes that the person did not commit; is not currently serving a term of imprisonment; and meets the requirements of §46-32-102, MCA.

Community Corrections Facilities and Programs Bureau – The Bureau oversees the facilities providing assessments and sanctions, prerelease, and treatment services. This Bureau is referenced interchangeably as Programs and Facilities Bureau (PFB) or Facilities and Programs Bureau (FPB) in procedures and forms.

Offender – For the purpose of this procedure, any individual serving a term of imprisonment or who is under the supervision of the Department of Corrections or its contracted service providers.

Probation and Parole – Oversees the Probation and Parole regional offices and interstate transfers.

III. TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE/RENTAL VOUCHERS FOR OFFENDERS:

A. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR OFFENDERS:

1. The Department maintains funds to provide financial assistance to eligible offenders for:
 - a. *Transitional Assistance* (see Section B below) – The requested funding must be reasonable, justifiable, and specifically allocated for a service, equipment, or other need: 1) to expedite an offender's discharge from a prerelease center, 2) to help in an offender's completion of a program, 3) for an offender being released from prison, and 4) for an offender's ongoing need in the community.
 - b. *Rental Vouchers* (see Section C below) – The requested rental voucher will be specifically allocated to aid in securing initial living arrangements that are suitable for eligible offenders upon their parole as stated in §20.13.108 A.R.M.

2. The offender must be eligible for the funds based on established criteria for the type of assistance requested.
3. Violations of supervision and/or facility write ups are not automatically disqualifying factors for transitional assistance or rental vouchers; however, these will be considered and may result in funds being denied.
4. An offender's request for transitional assistance funds and/or a rental voucher is made using *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request*. Every *Request* will be reviewed and considered by the FPB. FPB staff will determine whether the offender qualifies for transitional assistance funds, a rental voucher, or a combination.

B. TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS FOR OFFENDERS:

1. Transitional assistance funds may be used for:
 - a. room and board and personal care expenses for prerelease center residents:
 - 1) these funds should be requested prior to the offender's placement whenever possible, however, if it becomes apparent during the offender's placement that funds may be necessary, the request should be made as soon as possible after that determination; and
 - 2) funds for room and board or personal care expenses may be requested for up to three (3) months prior, the current month, or future months of the offender's stay at the prerelease center.
 - b. rent assistance or rent deposit;
 - c. temporary housing (hotel/motel);
 - 1) temporary housing at a hotel/motel may only be approved for up to one (1) week (7 days);
 - 2) temporary housing at a hotel/motel beyond the first week may be considered;
 - 3) damages or extra charges caused by an offender during a stay at a hotel/motel are the responsibility of the offender to pay;
 - 4) prior to a Pro-card charge for temporary housing at a hotel/motel, the Department staff member authorizing the charge to the staff member's Pro-card at the hotel/motel must also complete a payment authorization form clearly stating the offender's name, the daily rate, any taxes/fees, and the dates authorized. This form is generally available from the hotel/motel, but *PFB 6.1.204 (B) Payment Card Authorization Form* can be used. A copy of the completed form provided to the hotel/motel must be submitted with the staff member's Pro-card log.
 - d. extended duration housing at a hotel or motel, paid on a monthly basis;
 - e. transportation;
 - f. medication;
 - g. treatment costs; and
 - h. essential items or services without which an offender's ability to remain in compliance with the conditions of the offender's supervision is in jeopardy.
2. Eligible offenders are those:
 - a. flat discharging their sentence from prison;
 - b. being paroled or furloughed;

- c. currently in or being released from a prerelease center, assessment and sanction center, or a treatment facility; or
 - d. currently under or being released to the direct community supervision of Probation and Parole.
3. Funds will not be used for payment of offender's overdue expenses accrued at an FPB facility and offender has left the facility or accrued while under direct community supervision of Probation and Parole (rent, utilities, etc.).
4. For offenders on community supervision, funds may not be used for services that were court-ordered to be at the offender's expense.
5. The following information must be provided for review by the FPB:
 - a. information and background explaining why the offender is in need of the funds;
 - b. information regarding the offender's case plan progress and conduct;
 - c. treatment completed or currently enrolled in, or future plans for treatment (if applicable);
 - d. the amount of money the offender has in the offender's resident account and any outstanding debts;
 - e. how long it would take for the offender to save this amount of money in the length of time the offender would have to remain in the program, should funding not be approved;
 - f. identification of needed assistance, such as estimated monthly costs, contingency plans, etc.;
 - g. the estimated timeframe that the offender will use the funds MUST be specified;
 - h. vendor information;
 - i. a payment type must be selected, such as "Facility Payment" (for transitional assistance funds for prerelease centers only) or "Vendor Invoice" or "Pro-Card" for all other costs. If the vendor invoice option is chosen, the invoice is not required for request to be approved; however, the payment cannot be made without an invoice.
6. FPB will determine the funds for which an offender is eligible during the review of *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request*.
 - a. The availability of other sources of funding will be considered: Inmate Welfare Fund, rental voucher, state-contracted programs such as mental health centers and substance abuse programs, private insurance, Medicaid, etc.
 - b. Funds may not be used to pay FPB facilities for room and board or other debt for offenders who escape or are terminated from their placement unless a prior *Request* for those expenses was approved. Previously approved funds will be paid only for the days up to the offender's escape or termination.
 - c. Requests for over \$1000 must be approved by the FPB Chief or designee.
 - d. A maximum of \$600 may be approved for offenders who are flat discharging upon release from a facility.
7. Payments of Transitional Assistance Funds:
 - a. may be disbursed to the vendor via a Pro-card charge or upon receipt of an invoice by the Department;
 - b. may be made to an FPB facility for room and board and personal care expenses on behalf of the offender based on offender's need; or
 - c. may be made to an FPB facility for its payment to a vendor on behalf of the offender for

allowable expenses or needs. FPB must have approved *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/ Rental Voucher Request* prior to the payment made by the facility.

C. RENTAL VOUCHERS FOR OFFENDERS:

1. Funds for rental vouchers are available to eligible offenders who are being paroled from prison:
 - a. directly to Probation and Parole community supervision;
 - b. to Probation and Parole community supervision upon completion of a treatment program; or
 - c. to Probation and Parole community supervision after completion of an inmate worker placement.
2. Offenders completing a prerelease center program are NOT eligible for rental vouchers.
3. The prison Institutional Probation & Parole Officer (IPPO) must submit *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request* for ALL offenders designated in 1. above.
4. The financial eligibility of an offender will be determined by FPB staff prior to the offender leaving the prison and pursuant to §20.13.108, A.R.M.
5. The requested funding may be specifically allocated for rent for up to (3) three months:
 - a. Payment for only one (1) month will be issued at a time upon approval of *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request*;
 - b. Offender must remain eligible for the program each month;
 - c. Voucher may be used for a sober living home as provided in §20.13.108, A.R.M.;
 - d. Voucher will not be used for rent deposits; and
 - e. Voucher will not be used for temporary stays in a homeless shelter or hotel/motel.
6. Rental voucher funds will be disbursed only to a vendor:
 - a. A payment type of either "Vendor Invoice" or "Pro-Card" must be selected on the *Request*; and
 - b. If the vendor invoice option is chosen, the invoice is not required for a request to be approved; however, the payment cannot be made without an invoice.
7. Offenders approved for a rental voucher must have also been referred for services in the community such as substance use disorder treatment, mental health treatment, sex offender treatment, education services, employment services, cognitive behavioral programming, or other services that help reduce the risk of recidivism.
8. Offenders determined ineligible for a rental voucher may seek transitional assistance funds for rent assistance as outlined in III.B. above.

D. OFFENDER REQUESTS FOR TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS AND/OR RENTAL VOUCHERS:

1. *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request* must be completed as follows:
 - a. All applicable sections of the *Request* must be filled out.
 - b. A *transitional assistance* request may be pre-approved when the offender's needs have been identified prior to placement, or can be requested during offender's placement.
 - c. A *rental voucher* request must be approved prior to offender's release; therefore, requests must be submitted at least 5 (five) business days in advance of the release to determine if

the request is appropriate and meets the criteria for rental vouchers. If approval is needed prior to the 5 days, the requestor should call FPB at (406) 444-4333.

2. The *Request* is submitted as follows:
 - a. IPPO/Probation & Parole (P&P) Officer submits *Request* to Deputy Chief (DC) or designee for signature; OR
 - b. Facility staff submits *Request* to Facility Administrator or designee for signature.
 - c. DC or Facility Administrator, or designees, submits *Request* to correquests@mt.gov. Email subject line must read as follows:
"Facility name"/"P&P": offender last name, first name: DOC #: Transitional Assistance.
 - d. When an offender is at risk of immediate homelessness, the *Request* may be submitted as an emergency request. The person submitting the request must call FPB at (406) 444-4333 and explain the urgency of the request.
 - 1) Verbal authorization for expenditure of funds for the emergency requests may be given by FPB staff; however, the *Request* must be submitted within five (5) business days of the verbal authorization.
3. Unless a request has been identified as an emergency or urgent and has been staffed with FPB, all requests will be reviewed and a final determination will be made within 5 (five) business days of the submission of a completed *Request*.
4. If approved, *Request* is forwarded to the staff requesting funds, the contract beds accountant, and FPB budget analyst.
5. Approved vendor(s) will be instructed to submit their invoice for processing/payment as follows, unless otherwise directed by FPB staff:
 - a. to the offender's facility case manager, facility IPPO, or supervising P&P Officer for transitional assistance funds; and/or
 - b. to the offender's supervising P&P Officer for rental voucher.
6. Staff will send a copy of the invoice by email to correquests@mt.gov. Email subject line must read as follows:
"Facility name"/"P&P": offender last name, first name: DOC #: Transitional Assistance.

E. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS FOR OFFENDERS:

1. A vendor is required to submit a federal *Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification* with their invoice for the first approved payment.
2. Transitional assistance funds and rental vouchers will not be disbursed to family members or friends or used for their expenses unless the family member is a bona fide landlord and submits supporting documentation showing the family member is a bona fide landlord.
3. Funds will not be disbursed for expenses incurred without an approved *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request* unless FPB has given a verbal approval.
4. Funds not used within 120 days of approval will automatically be reallocated unless notification has been made to, and approved by, the FPB Chief or designee.

5. If an offender approved for funds has the offender's community supervision revoked before the funds are used, the funds will be reallocated by the Department.
6. Once approved, an invoice or Pro-card receipt must be submitted within the time specified, but no later than 120 days of approval. If more time is needed, offender must contact the offender's case manager or supervising P&P Officer who will contact the FPB.

IV. TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE AND/OR RENTAL VOUCHERS FOR CLAIMANTS:

A. TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR CLAIMANTS:

1. Pursuant to §46-32-102, MCA, the Department maintains funds to provide financial assistance to claimants released from imprisonment who intend to file a claim for damages for a wrongful conviction of a felony crime(s).
2. The claimant will complete Section A of *PFB 6.1.204 (D) Claimant Request for Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher*. Claimant must also provide the following:
 - a. *PFB 6.1.204 (E) Affidavit of Claimant* that contains: 1) the facts explaining the basis of the claim; 2) a verification under penalty of perjury; and 3) a statement of intent to file a claim within three (3) years;
 - b. A copy of: 1) court order for dismissal of criminal charges; 2) court order reflecting a finding of not guilty on retrial; or 3) the grant of a pardon based on claimant's innocence for the act that was the basis of the conviction; and
 - c. A federal *Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification* for the claimant.
 - d. All are submitted together to:
 Bureau Chief, Community Corrections Facilities and Programs Bureau
 Department of Corrections
 PO Box 201301
 Helena, MT 59620
3. Transitional assistance funds will be disbursed to the claimant only and not to family members or friends, or used for family/friend's expenses.
4. If the claimant fails to seek damages within the time period provided in §46-32-102, MCA, or if the claim is denied by the district court, claimant shall reimburse the state the full amount within one (1) year.

B. RENTAL VOUCHERS FOR CLAIMANTS:

1. Pursuant to the Department's voucher program, a rental voucher shall be provided to a claimant while the claimant's claim seeking damages for a wrongful conviction of felony crime(s) is pending.
2. Section B of *PFB 6.1.204 (D) Claimant Request for Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher* must be completed by the claimant and submitted with a copy of the claim filed in district court. All must be submitted to:

Bureau Chief, Community Corrections Facilities and Programs Bureau
Department of Corrections
PO Box 201301
Helena, MT 59620

3. The requested voucher may be specifically allocated for rent for up to (3) three months as long as the claimant's claim for damages remains pending, however, rent will be issued one (1) month at a time.
4. Generally, rental voucher funds will be disbursed only to a landlord (vendor). Vouchers will not be disbursed to family members unless the family member is a bona fide landlord and submits supporting documentation showing the family member is a bona fide landlord.
5. The landlord is required to submit a federal *Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification* to the Community Corrections Facilities and Programs Bureau with the invoice for the first approved payment.

V. CLOSING:

Questions regarding this procedure should be directed to the Community Corrections Facilities and Programs Bureau.

VI. FORMS:

PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request
PFB 6.1.204 (B) Payment Card Authorization Form
PFB 6.1.204 (C) Notice to Landlords
PFB 6.1.204 (D) Claimant Request for Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher
PFB 6.1.204 (E) Affidavit of Claimant